Reading the *Coyote School News*

**Author**  
Carol Carney Warren

**Grade Level**  
4

**Duration**  
2 – 3 class periods

**Lesson Description**
Students learn about the lives of ranchers in Southern Arizona by reading the book *Coyote School News* and find out about the many customs Americans have borrowed from Mexico.

**Standards**

**Strand 4 Geography**  
**Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms**  
PO 7 Locate physical and human features in Arizona using maps, illustrations or images  
**Concept 2: Places and Regions**  
PO 1 Describe how the Southwest has distinct physical and cultural characteristics.  
PO 2 Describe ways in which Arizona has changed over time from statehood to today.  
**Concept 4 Human Systems**  
PO 2 Describe how Mexico and Arizona are connected by movement of people, goods, and ideas.  
PO 4 Describe the cultural characteristics of Arizona's diverse population.

**Language Arts**  
**Reading**  
**Grade 4 Strand 1** Reading Process  
**Concept 6** Comprehension Strategies  
PO 4 Use graphic organizers in order to clarify the meaning of the text  
PO 6 Use reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect, making inferences, sequencing) to comprehend text  
**Grade 4 Strand 2** Comprehending Literary Text  
**Concept 2** Historical and Cultural Aspects of Literature  
PO 1 Describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature

**Writing**  
**Grade 4 Strand 3** Writing Applications  
**Concept 1** Expressive  
PO 1 Write a narrative based on imagined, or real events, observations, or memories
## Overview
Mexican-American ranching families practiced many wonderful and interesting customs from Mexico. Many of those customs are a part of American life today. Students will learn about the many cultural contributions made by Mexican-Americans to the ranching industry and our lives today.

## Purpose
In this lesson students will explore the legacy of the Mexican culture to the occupation of ranching and to American life today.

## Materials
- *Coyote School News* by Joan Sandin – 1 book per student or small group
- Map of the Gadsden Purchase- 1 per student and teacher overhead
- Student worksheets and graphic organizer – 1 per student
- Rulers

## Objectives
The student will be able to:
1. Locate the Gadsden Purchase on a map of Arizona.
2. Measure scale on a map of Arizona.
3. List cultural items and customs from Mexico.
4. Describe the events of a roundup in correct sequence.
5. Write a newspaper article about an event at their school.

## Time Required
2 – 3 class periods

## Procedure
*Prior learning required- students should understand sequence of events.*

### Session 1
1. Ask children to think of examples of life in America today that came from Mexico or the Mexican culture. List examples on the board or chart paper. Tell students they will be learning about these and other examples in a story they will be reading.
2. Discuss how immigrants to America bring with them many customs from their homelands. They continue to practice these customs after they become American citizens. Through the years, some of these customs (such as the examples they mentioned) have become part of our daily lives in America.
3. Hand out the student worksheet and Map of the Gadsden Purchase. Explain how Arizona once belonged to Mexico and have students read about how it became a part of the United States.
4. Have students locate the Gadsden Purchase on the “Map of the Gadsden Purchase “ and shade it in. Tell them they will be reading a story about children who live on ranches in this part of Arizona. They attend a school that is near the town of Amado, Arizona. Locate Amado on the map of...
Arizona. Using the map scale, have students calculate how far Amado is from both Tucson and Nogales and answer the questions on the worksheet.

5. Review with students that these ranch families practiced many customs from Mexico and as they read the story they will identify customs and ideas that come from the Mexican culture.

6. Give out the graphic organizer – Customs from Mexico - and begin reading the story. The story can be read together or individually as desired. As they read, have students identify customs from Mexico to write on the graphic organizer. The story may be read in two segments as your time allows. (1 – 2 class periods as desired by the teacher)

7. After reading, review with students how many of the jobs and activities on a ranch came from ranches in Mexico. The roundup is a very important time on a cattle ranch. Have students put the events of the roundup in the order in which they occurred in the story. You can have students reread pages 38 – 40 again or refer to the pages as they do the exercise.

8. End the session by reviewing the many customs from Mexico learned from reading *Coyote School News.*

**Session 2**

1. Review from the story how the children wrote stories about their school for the "Coyote News."

2. Have students discuss possible subjects they might write about if they had a class newspaper. List ideas on the board or a chart.

3. Have students write an article about their class for a class newspaper. They could use an idea from the class discussion or another of their own. They should use the 5 steps in the writing process and correct mechanics of writing.

4. Publish the students’ writing in a newspaper format.

**Assessment**

The students’ map work can be assessed for social studies. 1 point is given for coloring the Gadsden Purchase and 3 points for the map scale exercise. 75% is considered passing.

Reading can be assessed with the graphic organizer and the sequencing activity. 12 points are possible for the graphic organizer. 5 points are possible for sequencing. 80% is considered passing.

Writing can be assessed as a personal narrative using the 6-trait rubric.

**Sources**

Extension Activity Suggestions

Visit the site [http://digital.library.arizona.edu/cowpuncher](http://digital.library.arizona.edu/cowpuncher), as suggested by Joan Sandin, for the school newspapers written by children in southern Arizona. Share some of them with your students.

Read to the students, *The Year of the Ranch* by Alice McLerran. ISBN0-670-85131-0 This is the story of a family’s year on a ranch outside of Yuma, AZ. It tells of a town family’s experience as Papa tries to make the desert “bloom like a rose.” Although the title states a ranch, it is an agricultural, not a cattle ranch.

There is information about how ranch children played in the *Arizona Territorial Cookbook: The Food and Lifestyles of a Frontier* by Melissa Ruffner Weiner. ISBN 0-89865-312-6